

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



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THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
OF ART

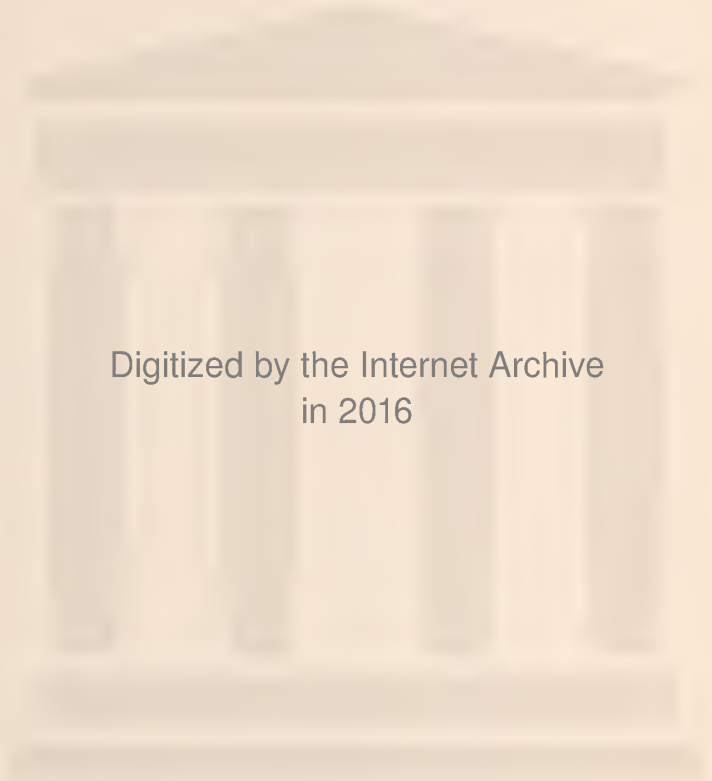
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THE
FEUARDENT COLLECTION

OF
Antiquities, Coins and Gems,

*OFFERED FOR INSPECTION
AND PURCHASE*

AT
No. 30 LAFAYETTE PLACE, NEW YORK CITY.

NEW YORK:
GASTON L. FEUARDENT & CO.
1879.

LIBRARY OF THE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART,
No.



THE undersigned would respectfully inform numismatists, archæologists, and collectors of antiquities, that they have opened, in the City of New York, an establishment designed to facilitate the object of those engaged in such pursuits.

Students and collectors in these directions have heretofore been surrounded with marked and specific difficulties, owing to the nearly absolute want of the necessary materials. These difficulties it is intended to obviate by the foundation of such an institution as those which are common in Europe, where collectors may be supplied with technical information otherwise difficult to obtain, besides being aided in their efforts to gather together representative articles in the different departments of antiquarian research.

To Museums, Colleges, and other public institutions, as well as to private collectors, it is believed that such an establishment will prove a much-needed adjunct towards the proper investigation of antiquarian lore—particularly in view of the unquestionable and attested authenticity which will characterize whatever specimens we may exhibit.

The Classical Collections which we shall import—favorable illustrative specimens being at present on exhibition in our cases—will date from the Stone Age, articles and objects coeval with the Deluge, to the Mediæval Period ; embracing eras covering many thousand years.

In Numismatics we offer to collectors specimens beginning with the earliest coinage of the Greeks, in about 800 B.C., and extending down to the coins of our own times, thus covering a numismatic period of more than two thousand six hundred years.

The archæological and numismatic collectors of Europe find in such establishments as this which we purpose to organize and found, the best possible means for the interchange of ideas and information, and the most satisfactory and authentic market for the purchase and sale of specimens. It will be the effort of the undersigned to conduct the present undertaking with a view to the best interests of their patrons, and of the valuable arts which it is their business and pleasure to preserve and promote. Towards this end the aid and countenance of all who are interested in these studies are respectfully requested.

We desire to express our cordial thanks to the officials of the Museums of New York, and to the gentlemen members of the American Numismatic and Archæological Society, for courtesies and favors bestowed upon us, and to invite these and all others of kindred tastes and pursuits to inspect our collections freely at all times.

GASTON L. FEUARDENT & CO.,

DEALERS IN

Classical Antiquities, Coins, Gems, Archæological Jewelry, and Numismatic Books.

30 Lafayette Place, New York City.

THE FEUARDENT COLLECTION.

I.

THE STONE AGE.

WE first consider the archæolithic period, or that in which occurred implements and weapons of rough-hewn and unpolished stone. Here are axes, knives, and chisels, found in the beds of the diluvium, in the famous localities of St. Acheul, Abbeville, and elsewhere; or in the caves of the South of France, at Laugerie, Moustiers, Arcy, etc.



AXE FROM THE DRIFT.

These articles were made by the simple process of chipping,

with other hard stones, pieces of flint, until the latter approximated to the desired shape and size for application to whatever purpose was intended.

Here we are led at once to the reflection that man, wherever found, experiences similar wants, and employs similar devices to supply them. In America, precisely as in Europe, the primitive man selected the hardest stone he could find, cut his material as best he might into tools and weapons, set these in handles made from the bones of dead animals, and employed the implements thus formed, either for defensive purposes, or to aid him in procuring food to sustain life. Human intelligence at this period had reached thus far and no farther; if these imperishable relics, and the absence of those of a higher character, are to be accepted as testimony.



POLISHED AXE WITH HANDLE.

The neolithic period, which is next in order in the known history of man, discloses quite a different condition, and displays marked improvement in skill and art. Now the stone implements are polished to a degree of fineness difficult to excel in our own time. The implements are more varied in form, as well as more pleasing in appearance, showing the awakening of taste, equally with a more comprehensive sense of adaptation to new requirements.

THE AGE OF BRONZE.

Now arrives a step in the advancement of civilization, whose momentous importance could hardly be conceived from consideration of the simple change of custom, whose occurrence has occasioned such marvellous results. From the employment of stone, to that of metal, for the construction of tools and weapons, appears certainly a simple transition. Yet its influence upon mankind can hardly be overrated. As the primitive man of the stone age dwelt in caves, at times occupied by the bears and other wild beasts of the period, and in lake-dwellings; so now, with improved facilities accorded him, we find him improving the construction, and strengthening these pile-founded huts known as "Lacustrine," elevated over the waters of the lakes of Switzerland and Italy, the better to evade the predatory incursions of ferocious animals. Fire destroyed the homes of the lake-dwellers; and their implements, fashioned of bronze, were imbedded in the mud of the lakes, whence they have been recovered through modern research and exploration.

As the chief occupations of man, at this period, were hunting and fishing, so the articles which have come down to us from their domestic economy, are found to have been formed for and used in the practice of these vocations. These articles are axes, spear-heads, knives, and even fish-hooks of bronze—with fragments of nets, cloth, and other textile fabrics.

With improvement in the arts which provided necessities for

this ancient race, there came also—as though indicative of advancing intelligence—a sense of appreciation of the merely ornamental. Now there began to be fashioned articles for the adornment of women; bracelets, hair-pins, tastefully engraved with something approaching to originality of design; here, in fact,



BRONZE IMPLEMENTS FROM THE LAKE-DWELLINGS.

we are surprised to find evidences of desires, and of vocations,

which we are accustomed to accredit only to a comparatively high state of civilization. And this is certainly more than three thousand years ago.

With the study of such objects as these, whose nature we have barely indicated, ends our material for the investigation of the prehistoric age.

CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES.

The student of archæology, in so far as it applies to historic times, must necessarily acquaint himself with the productions of the higher conditions of civilization enjoyed by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, and examples of these are accordingly submitted. Meanwhile, it would be futile, in the brief space to be covered by the present writing, to attempt any disquisition upon the character of such antiquities. It need only be said, in passing, that these comprise images of the Gods, Goddesses, and Heroes of ancient times, mythical or historical, and vases, in marble, bronze, glass, and terra-cotta; with jewels, intaglios, cameos, arms, and implements of every description. Such are found in the tombs of Cyprus, Athens, Italy, and other localities, and their value and importance to the student of archæology are everywhere recognized.

But not alone to the archæological student are such objects as these of value and interest. It is a charming and wholly creditable element in the recent development of art-taste, that an impulse has been given to the collection of antiquities for

purposes of home decoration—than which there can be imagined no more fitting selection. For not only do such objects present features of attraction possessed by no others of their class, but they afford diversion and instruction as well, by inviting consideration of the arts they illustrate, and the periods they represent—conveying, besides, correct indications of the progress of the ancients in the arts of design, and affording opportunity for comparison with the works of modern times.



ETRUSCAN VASE.

But while refraining from any detailed description of the articles to which we refer, we must needs pause for a moment to make reference to a class of art-objects which we believe to be entirely unknown in America, some specimens of which it is our good fortune to be enabled to exhibit.

These are statuettes in terra-cotta, found in the tombs at Tanagra, in Bœotia, whose capital was the “seven-gated Thebes:” a country more famed for its horses and its grain, than for its sculpture or ceramics. Yet Bœotia is famous also for being the birthplace of Pindar and of Plu-

STATUETTES FROM TANAGRA.



tarch, while mythological legend attributes to the same country the story of Œdipus, and that of the transformation of Actæon at the command of the outraged Goddess Diana.

One would suppose, then, that if the plastic arts were followed in this region, the choice of subjects would lie in the direction of mythology, as was the case in other parts of Greece. And it is one of the curious facts of classical history that this is not the case. In place of solemn divinities, and those symbolic images of heathen mythology which form the staple subject of sculpture and modelling among the Greeks, we have here the representations of the Bœotians of the period, clad in their accustomed habiliments, and carefully designed to portray accurately even the minor features of hair-dressing, head-gear, and personal adornment. There is something so incongruous in these examples, when considered by the light of the art of that age as commonly represented, that one is quite at a loss to account for them. It seems, however, that the people of Tanagra, while observing the common ancient custom of burying images with their dead, chose, instead of the figures of gods and goddesses usually selected, the familiar representations of their own race and period; conceiving, doubtless, that these might better enliven the gloomy solitude of the grave, and seem to afford accustomed society to the departed spirit. These figures have an air of every-day appearance, the bustling activity of the man or woman of the world, the assumed dignity of the citizen, the laughing grace of childhood; drapery in its accustomed folds, fabrics with their native colors still showing, jewels with the sheen of gold not even tarnished.

It is every-day life in 400 B.C. projected into the last quarter of the nineteenth century—art of the period of Louis Quinze executed by the genius of the contemporaries of Phidias. It is with no little pride that we exhibit, we believe, for the first time in America, Greek art under this graceful and attractive appearance.

ANCIENT COINS.

“The knowledge of coins is absolutely necessary to those who desire to study history thoroughly; for history is not to be learned in books alone, which do not say always everything, nor always the truth. We must, then, have recourse to documents which justify it, and which have not been affected either by malice or ignorance: and such documents are coins. We learn by them thousands of things equally important and interesting, which are not to be found anywhere else.”—*Rollin.*

In estimating the value of Rollin's words just quoted, it is necessary to call to mind the fact that in ancient times coinage was quite a different act from what it is at present. Instead of striking a simple, unvaried piece of metal, differing only in the date, and otherwise presenting a dull monotony of design, the ancients employed their coins, as we do medals, to perpetuate the memory of important occurrences or historical facts. Thus the coins of the people filled the place of archives, becoming so many metallic and imperishable records of their deeds.

Thus, in Greece, not only the people and the kings were accustomed to coin money, but the towns had also their distinct coinage, upon which were displayed the effigies of their

favorite divinities, information concerning their principal products and manufactures, and facts in their history, running back often into the period of fable: even the games and other customs of the people were faithfully recorded and delineated by this means. All these curious particulars are found illustrated on coins, and so finely executed as to make them as well real monuments of art.

So, also, the Roman coinage illustrates the history of Rome through a period covering many centuries. At first the rude bronze pieces, struck by order of the Kings of Rome, convey no record, save by the absence of all memorial whatsoever. Soon, however, we find these pieces impressed with images through which we may communicate with the dead past they chronicle; and, finally, we reach the gold and silver coins struck by order of the Republic, in whose inscriptions and designs we may read the history of Rome down to the time of the Empire.



COIN OF HERACLEA.

The imperial coins date from Pompey to the last of the Byzantine Emperors—a period of over fourteen centuries. Upon these we find an unbroken series of portraits, not only of the emperors, empresses, and Cæsars, but also those of those tyrants who played so important a rôle in the great Roman drama; yet of whom some held sway but for a few days, and are known to history only through their coins.

And it is to be observed that the portraits of Roman coins are not—like those of our day—conventional figures (as the effigy of Queen Victoria on the British coinage of 1879 repre-

sents her as she appeared when she ascended the throne in 1837). Among the ancients, on the contrary, the portrait followed, with each recurring coinage, the actual changes of physiognomy in the personages portrayed, thus exhibiting correct representations of the same dignitaries at the different stages of their official lives.

And as the obverse of these coins displayed the rulers, so the reverse set forth the leading incidents of their reigns. Here we have the victories of the people over their enemies, monuments illustrating important events, progresses and processions, triumphs, donations to the people, public games, races, and combats in the arena. We have, too, representations of heathen divinities; and, finally, public works, built or restored under the reigns of the emperors designated, such as monuments, bridges, aqueducts, roads, and canals.

MODERN COINS.

To enter at length into the considerations of coinage after the Roman period, would carry us far beyond the scope and intention of this essay.

We should have, in fact, to consider the history of all nations extant, or nearly all, for there are but few which have not their metallic history. Even North America, though relatively a new country, possesses a numismatic history of importance, beginning with the coins struck for the New England Colonies by the mother country; or, possibly, with that rare piece

struck by order of Louis XIV., with the design of facilitating the commerce of Canada.

There is, fortunately, no need to direct the attention of Americans to the importance of collecting the coins of the Colonies and of the Republic. The local interest felt in this study is too well understood by European purveyors, and it is equally known that it is only necessary to offer good examples of rare American pieces, to have them eagerly secured by intelligent American collectors. It is, in fact, to awaken a similar degree of interest in the coinage of



HALF EAGLE OF 1815.

the remote past, and afford information on the subject, not heretofore readily attainable, that our efforts will tend, and to which purpose this pamphlet is designed to call attention.

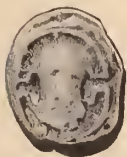
THE RELATION OF COINS TO THE FINE ARTS.

The progress of coins from the condition of dumb tokens of barter, to that of artistic symbolism and record in metal, is the most marvellous feature of the study of numismatics.

It is one of the wonders of man's ingenuity, that, with a few trays of coins before us, we are supplied with the genesis of art in all the phases of its rise and its decadence. This, however, would not be the case, were it not that the dies for ancient

coins were designed by the best artists of the period—those having already a high reputation as engravers of cameos and intaglios.

We first meet with art in coins at their very invention, about 800 B.C., and witness the first steps of artists in this direction, in their efforts to copy figures of persons or of animals, as the initiative of design. On one side of such pieces we find the rude image, the reverse containing only a hollow square em-
ployed to hold the metal to the lower part of the die during



COIN OF THERES.

the process of striking. Gradually, as the image on the obverse becomes disclosed and perfected—the sunken square of the reverse takes form in its turn, and presently small subjects are found engraved therein. Now the field of the reverse becomes flat, and about the year 400 B.C. noble
bas-reliefs, representative
of Greek art of the time

of Phidias, Scopas, and their contemporaries, begin to appear. The coins of that period are the finest monuments of numismatic art imaginable, and have never been equalled by those of any other people at any period of the world's history. It is the fashion to say of such pieces—"How well these are struck for such an early period."

This betokens either ignorance or the absurdity of affectation. So far from deprecating criticism, the coins of those times have



COIN OF SYRACUSE.

never since been approached as works of art ; and in following the course of coinage, we witness its gradual decay as a fine art, until the universal conquests of the Romans, and their ascendancy as a purely military people had given art its death-blow. By restraining the freedom of design, this condition of their country imposed upon the Roman artists a certain mannerism and stiffness of execution fatal to excellence in art.

This result, it may be observed, invariably characterizes art under a purely military regime. Originality of conception is struck silent and pulseless through its chilling influence, and purposeless and unmeaning vagaries assume the place of the ancient vital and impressive designs.

During the long period of the reigns of the Roman emperors, we are enabled, thanks to their coins, to follow the progress of art with fidelity, almost day by day. Now a fatal decadence begins to display itself. It is true, that in certain reigns, as those of Nero, Hadrian, Commodus, and even Postumus, a certain appearance of renaissance is visible ; but under the reign of the successors of these emperors, it becomes obvious that these were only faint and fitful glimmerings of the flambeau of art, which is, meanwhile, expiring. And so the standard and level of art continue to lower, until, when Christianity first appears on coins (about A.D. 312), it is almost at its ebb ; for we find on the coins of the succes-



COIN OF NERO.

sors of Constantine only barbarous images, the artists of the period being unable either to create, or even to copy the simplest figure or legend accurately, not to say artistically. At last the Roman coins come down to us covered with meaningless lines, performing a duty which is purely perfunctory.

Now appears the dead blank of the "dark ages," under whose malign influence, art is stifled and voiceless, as is every other element of progress and civilization. And as the decay was gradual, so is the restoration. Slowly and with struggles light begins to dawn, barbarism gives place to intelligence, and our coin chart depicts the better efforts of the Gothic period, of which the reign of St. Louis of France, in the thirteenth century, offers, perhaps, the best examples. A constant improvement is discernible through the reigns of Louis XII. and Francis I., of Charles V. and Henry VIII., and we are in the midst of the Renaissance, when fine portraits retake their place on coins, and maintain themselves there in almost their ancient beauty of execution, until the time of Louis XIII. and Cromwell, during which comparatively brief period coinage has regained in mechanical perfection of fabrication, what it has possibly lost in artistic excellence of design.

But since those days a new descent has occurred, and it is a fact, that, excepting in the barbaric times, there has never been a period when insignificance in design and feebleness of execution so characterized a majority of the pieces struck by the leading nationalities. Though affluent in images of kings, and



COIN OF ANDRONICUS.

symbols of all the virtues, there is neither portraiture nor wise suggestion to be found in them. It would certainly be to the advantage, not of ourselves alone, but of our posterity, if those who direct the designing of the coins of the present day, were to study the splendid examples to which we have referred. Meanwhile, it remains, and deserves repetition, that for a complete and imperishable history of human art, one has only to choose judiciously and study faithfully a few trays of those metallic archives which we call coins.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL JEWELRY.

The taste of the day, which prefers antiquities for house decoration, chooses likewise that its jewelry shall be of the same character. Antique gems, many of them works of the highest order of art, are framed in settings copied faithfully after contemporary designs, and find willing ownership among ladies who desire to be *à la mode*. It is creditable to modern feminine taste that this should be the case, and the undersigned have taken great pleasure in collecting examples of rare and beautiful coins and antique stones for this special purpose. These have been set in necklaces, rings, bracelets, and earrings, by the artist of the establishment, who has made a special study of antique jewelry, and are respectfully offered for the consideration of the ladies of America. It may not improperly add a special element of value and interest to these beautiful and rare gems, that they simulate exactly, if they be

not indeed the very same, as the ornaments worn by a Helen, a Cleopatra, or a Hero.

...

It is proper to state for the benefit of those to whom we are personally unknown, that the most direct and complete guarantees will be furnished as to the absolute authenticity of every object that we offer for sale.

GASTON L. FEUARDENT & CO.

BRITISH MUSEUM,

March 8, 1878.

I have great pleasure in stating that, during the time for which M. Gaston L. Feuardent was head of the London house of MM. Rollin and Feuardent, of Paris, I formed the highest opinion of the accuracy of his judgment of the authenticity of coins, and in cases of difficulty was very glad to ask his opinion. On this account, as well as for his large knowledge of coins and antiquities, and the rigid honour which has ruled his transactions, I greatly regret the loss of so valuable a coadjutor.

REG'D STUART POOLE.



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MUSEUM OF ART**

Thomas J. Watson Library

